1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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101 is relatively small, and is localized in the interior of French
619 Guiana, not far from the Dutch boundary. In any consideration of the Guiana Negroes, yet a fourth group must be kept in mind—that of the Negroes of the coastal region, who remained enslaved until their emancipation in 1865.

989 The country of the Saramacca people is reached from Paramaribo, the capital and port of the colony of Suriname (Dutch Guiana), by the weekly train which goes some ninety-five miles to Kabel, where the railway meets the river. From Kabel transportation into the far interior is by dugout canoe, owned and manned by Saramacca men.

133 The country above Kabel, which the Saramacca people call the "big bush," is jungle. Over the watershed lie the Amazon basin and the forests of northern Brazil. Once in this region, the traveler has no contact with European civilization, though he is still under the protection of the Dutch Government.

121 The picture which we draw of the Saramacca people is
●114 based upon two field trips to Dutch Guiana, undertaken in the summers of 1928 and 1929. During our second trip we traversed the entire stretch of the Saramacca country from below Kabel, where the Awka villages are located, to the last native habitation on the Pikien Rio, beyond which are some fields, then uninhabitated miles of wilderness to the Brazilian border.

The ethnological work conducted among the Saramacca tribe of Bush Negroes and the Negroes of the coastal region of Suriname represents a portion of an investigation into the physical and cultural characteristics of the Negroes of the New World. This research, which is still in progress, has included field work in the United States, in Dutch Guiana, and in Africa, and some comparative study in the islands of the Caribbean. It began in 1923 with an inquiry into Negro-white crossing in the United States.[1] As the work progressed it became evident that the problem

[1] For the results of this portion of the investigation, see M. J. Herskovits, "The American Negro, a Study in Racial Crossing" (1928); and "The Anthropometry of the American Negro" (1931).

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demanded more knowledge of the sources of the slaves who compose the Negro ancestry of the American Negroes than was available. This knowledge, which historical documents do not give us, was, therefore, to be sought in a comparison of Negro cultures in the New World and in Africa. 121 114

As the research was continued, moreover, it became apparent that the scientific problem of the Negro in the New World held implications of larger significance, and that the history of the Negro in the New World has constituted a vast "laboratory" experiment in the processes of racial mixture and of cultural contacts. The Negroes who were brought to the New World came of various West African stocks, and here they mingled their blood with the English, the French, the Dutch, with the Danish, Spanish, and Portuguese who became their masters, and they absorbed in varying degrees the culture of these masters. At the same time, they came in contact with aboriginal Indian peoples with whom they also mingled. But the Negro has not only absorbed; he has also given. The conclusion, still held by many students, that the Negro slave came to this country a savage child with or without his loin cloth, and as naked culturally as he was sartorially, is one which cannot today be accepted.

At the beginning of our field work in Suriname, one of us went up the Suriname River to study the Bush Negroes, and the other remained in Paramaribo to collect folk lore from the town Negroes and to ascertain what Africanisms could be discerned in their beliefs and behavior. When we met and compared notes, some striking things came to light, for bush and town Negroes were, as the evidence in hand suggested, much more closely allied culturally than had been realized, while both were seen to have many aspects of culture that clearly link them with West African and other New World Negroes. 121

Thus, in bush and town, the Negroes hold the same concept and offer the same explanations of the soul and 196 191

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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184 emphasized that whatever the differences, much of Africa remains in the coastal region. Thus, to cite an instance, at a *winti* dance in Paramaribo one night, the drummers were grumbling about the slowness with which possession was coming on. At last the priestess, possessed by *Lebba*, the Nigerian-Dahomean god of the crossroads, began to dance. Whereupon an elderly drummer flung up his hands and cried out, "Praise God, idolatry is not dead yet!" The word he used for idolatry was Dutch, and he pronounced it in Negro-English, *afkodrai*.

121 The importance of the Bush Negroes for the student of Negro cultures, then, is that they live and think today as did their ancestors who established themselves in this bush, which is to say that they live and think much as did the Negroes who were brought to other parts of the New World, and who became the ancestors of the New World Negroes of the present day.

In planning this book, therefore, it has seemed more important to stress the Bush Negro's attitudes toward his own civilization, and his own logic in explaining his customs, than to give a more conventional description of an integrated village or the tribal life of a primitive people. Such attitudes, moreover, whether analyzed among Negroes in Africa, Guiana, the Caribbean, or in the United States, can be studied most advantageously when they are juxtaposed against the factor of outsiders—in this case ourselves, a man and a woman, who came as friendly whites.

•114 This book, however, is not an ethnographic treatise. The scientific discussion of these data will appear in monographic form, while the correspondences between bush and town Negroes, and between these and other Negro groups found in the New World, are included in a memoir on the folk lore of the town Negroes of Paramaribo which is now in press. The situations to which we have given emphasis are those which have a direct bearing upon the beliefs and practices of Negro peoples wherever they are found today, but they are presented as they would—and did—actually

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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occur among the Saramacca people. Nothing has been included either in descriptive detail, in the spoken or unspoken thoughts attributed to a Bush Negro, or in characterization, which has not been given us by our Bush Negro informants or has not been witnessed by ourselves. If the thoughts of Moana Yankuso or of any of the elders who figure in the book seem sophisticated when contrasted with the simplicity of the material life of the Bush Negroes, then it is because the stereotype of the childlike, carefree Negro has been so widely accepted. The subtlety and astuteness of a man like Moana Yankuso, or of Sedefo, our chief paddler and the right-hand man of Yankuso's strongest rival, or of Apanto, the sorcerer, cannot be too emphatically stated.

In view of the political factions on the river, and our concern lest these make capital of the fact that a village had been generous in the confidences given the whites, several villages do not appear under their own names. For Headman Moana Yankuso was an old man when we visited him, and alliances for the succession to his high office were at that time already being formed, alliances which, since his death some three years ago, have undoubtedly been consolidated and made effective for the time when his successor is to be named. Villages, therefore, are in some instances given the names of rapids in the river, and not necessarily the names of the rapids found nearest to the villages of which we are writing. In this manner we have sought to preserve the anonymity of the villages without violating the authenticity of place names. Men and women, as well, with the exception of the priestess Amasina, Moana Yankuso, his daughter Wilhelmina, the bassia of his village, Bibifo, and the Captains of Baikutu, S'ei, and Dahomey do not appear under their own names, but under other typical Saramacca Negro names.

Work of the type we have attempted cannot be accomplished without the cooperation of many persons, and we are privileged to acknowledge here our gratitude to those

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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Chapter XIV

GRANMAN MOANA YANKUSO

I

•114 WHATEVER the rôle of the great man in the life of a people, there are names whose very mention bring up almost full-bodied an epoch, a great dynamic sweep of human thought and activity, of achievement, and sometimes of disaster. Perhaps the great individual does not exist until the poetic vision of a people gives to the skeleton of a name the flesh of a godhead. From earliest times and from people of varying civilizations have come down tales of these godheads, created, let us say if we like, out of a psychic need in the life of human beings to exalt personality in order that, imaginatively at least, the chasm between desire and insufficiency might be spanned.

643 59 In the council house of Granman Yankuso, as we listened to his stories, these thoughts constantly recurred to us, and it is not strange, therefore, that now as we try to collect images and impressions of the man for an objective picture of him not only as a Bush Negro but as an individual, we think of him as typifying among the Negroes of the Saramacca today such a name and such a personality.

Already Moana Yankuso was something of a myth among the people of the coastal region and among his own people.

[15] Men on the coast said, "Granman Yankuso is a silent man. You will be with him for days, and he will never utter a word."

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FOREWORD

EVER since the discovery of America, writers of books have been busy tracking down clues to the transplanting of primitive cultures from the Old World to the New. For the most part these clues have proved false, but one case is made, the transplanting of pagan West African Negroes in northern South America. These Bush Negroes, as they are called, originated in slavery days as colonies formed by runaway slaves. There was room in the jungle and protection too. Something over two hundred years have elapsed since the first of these fugitive slaves set up communities of their own, twice as long ago as the founding of Chicago.

Several books have been written about the Bush Negroes, but none by an author so familiar with their intimate life as in the accompanying volume. For the reader to comprehend the Bush Negro, he must get the feel of the jungle; this he will have when he completes the first few chapters. Then our author carries him into the village where he looks in upon Bush Negro life and acquires some knowledge of quaint customs, most of which the slave ancestors of the present Bush Negroes brought with them from Africa.

CLARK WISSLER

Professor of Anthropology, Yale University; Curator in Chief, Department of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History.

[pp. iv–vi Contain no Text]

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INTRODUCTION

I FIRST met the Djukas in St. Laurent, which is the prison port of French Guiana, and the centre of the penitentiary system which is popularly known as the Devil's Island Penal Colony.

The Djukas come in to St. Laurent from the jungle. They come to trade jungle rubber and timber for bright beads and gunpowder and fish-hooks and the brilliant lengths of calico which they use as loin-cloths. When they have made their purchases they often pause on their way back to the canoes which they have left moored at the bank of the wide copper-coloured river which separates French from Dutch Guiana. They pause outside the penitentiary gates and stare at the French convicts as they are marched out to the hard labour which is part of their prison sentence.

And I could have had no more dramatic introduction than this to the wild free Djukas of the Guiana jungle.

The convicts march with the listless feet of diseased, undernourished, hopeless men. They are sad and silent. The Djukas stand erect, confident, and free. In the primitive communism of their forest life, they recognize no masters. It is in every Djuka's power to live as well as does every other Djuka. There is just enough social organization to keep order in the tribe and no more. There are no anarchists among them. No

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181 one feels any grudge against society. There is small temptation to theft. There are, therefore, no questions of capital and labour, no leisure class, no organized industries, no exploitation either of men or of raw materials, no banks to rob, no checks to forge. Under such conditions economic crimes are practically eliminated. Man lives off the jungle and the streams which intersect it, and there are at his disposal uncounted miles of stream and of jungle. Such crimes as exist [674 among the human inhabitants of these forests arise chiefly 578] in quarrels over women. But where divorce is free and in- [586 stantaneous, and sexual relationships are taken lightly, even 833] the difficulties between men and women are enormously simplified.

114 And as these Djukas stood curiously staring outside the prison gates of St. Laurent, they seemed to me to stand in judgment. When I watched them get into their canoes and paddle upstream, returning to their green jungle fastnesses, and heard them call to one another from canoe to canoe, and heard their laughter ring out across the sunlit water, I felt that they went back to the forest, well content that their slave ancestors of two hundred years ago had fled from the white man and all his ways, back to the jungle, there to lead the primitive life of their African forbears.

I had gone to French Guiana to study the convict life of the Devil's Island Penal Colony. And when that had been completed, my husband and I made a journey through the interior of Dutch Guiana, travelling by the streams and trails used by fugitives from the French prisons. This is how we

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happened to cover a fraction of the Djuka territory, so familiar to Dr. Kahn.

We lived for a time at the Djuka village of Moengo Tappo, and from there visited other villages on neighbouring rivers and creeks. And there I felt again the sharp contrast between the primitive and the civilized. Through the Djukas, I saw civilization in perspective; and especially I saw that tragic phase of it which passes through prison gates.

Djuka life makes us stop to think all over again about everything. It makes us see what we have gained, as well as what we have lost.

There is, for example, no nonsense about white superiority among the Djukas. They are proud to the point of savage arrogance. Hatred and distrust of the white man are as much a part of their inheritance as is their jungle lore. As among the Negroes of Haiti, you must win your way. But when you are finally accepted, not as a superior being, but as an equal, then how warm and charming a thing their friendship is!

The Djuka farewell to us is a beautiful memory. As we passed down the river, between walls of forest where orchids were in gorgeous blossom, the Djuka villagers came down to the water's edge to say good-bye, raising their hands high and bowing low to bring down blessings upon us.

Indirectly it was these Djukas who introduced me to Dr. Kahn. At the time that we were in the Guiana forest Dr. Kahn was in another part of the same jungle, though neither of us knew of the presence or the existence of the other. Later, after our return to New York, our common interest in the

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1/4 Djukas led a friend to arrange a dinner party for the purpose of bringing us together. And while we sat down to a glittering table and an elaborate meal, far away in the heart of the Guiana forest our mutual friends, the Djukas, were living the frugal life of the jungle. And our talk of them about that dinner table, brought, as every memory of them always brings, the same sense of acute contrast, and the same questioning of our own standards.

In our modern life of crowded interests, intense competition, and overproduction of all commodities, I feel strongly that a book must, from one angle or another, justify its existence.

And the justification for Dr. Kahn's *Djuka,* is not only that it is the best and most complete book on the subject, but that it gives us a perspective on our own problems. We have reached a point where we begin to realize that we must stop and take stock of this civilization, so painfully built by those who have gone before. We must be able to say what is good enough to survive, and what must be eliminated as a menace to human happiness. In what ways, for example, are the Djukas happier than we are? And how can we revise our life, so that we may include in it the best of jungle life, without losing any of the good of our own civilization? We have come to a world crisis in which we must look at this subject very seriously and as clearly as may be. And if we are to get any light from primitive life, it is essential that the books to which we go for a picture of primitive conditions shall be accurate. Romanticized versions of tropic isles and idyllic

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jungles will be no more good to us than tales of Aladdin's lamp, or of godmothers with fairy wands, or of beneficent elves who, while we sleep, bring order out of our chaos. We need the truth and we have a right to demand it. And the outstanding quality of Dr. Kahn's book is this integrity which we so greatly need. He has applied to his study of the Djuka the same exactitude as that which has made him distinguished as a bacteriologist. And to this scientific exactitude he has added the zest of exploration, a feeling for beauty, and an affectionate understanding of the primitive Djuka.

He tells us that in the writing of the book he has been "inspired by sincere admiration of the manner and success of these escaped African people in the adaptation of their primitive culture to a new environment." But even more significant of the spirit of his work, is the fact that in his acknowledgments to Anthropologists and Colonial Secretaries and Governors, he includes gratitude to the black men who are the subjects of his book. "I am," he writes, "deeply indebted to the black men, particularly to Abaisa, the headman of Lombe; to Moi-Man and Bat-Jou of the Aucaners; to Ahleesie of the Boni tribe; and to old Captain Koffay of the Paramacca nation." But this sympathy with his subject never becomes sentimental. Dr. Kahn remains a scientist from the first page to the last: clear-sighted, without prejudice, and singularly free from self-consciousness or self-exploitation.

Dr. Kahn tells of this Djuka life as it is lived today in the depths of the Guiana forest. And he describes it in such accurate detail that the reader may stare at this jungle civiliza-

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tion as the Djukas stand and gaze at the criminals of France. And through this study of the Djuka, the reader may know Djuka life for himself. In the pages of Dr. Kahn's book he journeys up tropical rivers to jungle villages whose names, being translated are, "Try me," "God knows," "Don't Touch Me," and the "Village of the Foot that has no Resting-Place." He meets men whose names mean "Waving Flag," "He Speaks the Truth," "Nice Fellow," "Laughs When He Talks," and "Love Is Sweet."

Dr. Kahn takes his reader far into the interior, for his starting point is where superficial travellers end. The journey leads to the tribe which has two languages: one for ordinary use, and the other a secret language which they call "deepee talkee"; and to strange villages which a man must enter carrying a paddle before him as a symbol that he is voyaging. It is a journey among peoples proud and spirited and courageous, descended from ancestors so bold in their rebellion that they were able to conclude treaties whereby the white man paid them a tribute which their descendants still receive in the form of an annual gift from the Dutch authorities to the headmen of the various Djuka tribes. The reader thus finds himself among the only primitive people in the world to whom the white man pays tribute; among a people to whom magic is as real as science is to us; who believe that spirits, both good and evil, inhabit the very streams and trees of the forest; people who know how to manufacture courage through the hypnotic intoxication of the tomtom and how to get rid of fatigue in the ecstasy of the dance; people whose

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art sense is devoted entirely to the decoration of gifts for their women, while no pains are taken in the decoration of religious objects. The Djuka reasons that "if a God is a good God, well disposed toward the black man, he does not care whether his fetishes are well executed or not"; while, "if he is a bad God, he will continue to be bad, regardless of whether much time has been spent in adorning his fetishes."

All this is picturesque; but, let me repeat that Dr. Kahn does more than give a vivid and authentic study of this twentieth century primitive; somehow in a starkly true unbiased picture, without ever pointing a moral, or presenting a personal conclusion, he contrives to make us see ouselves at the same time that we see the Djuka. And in that achievement, I think, lies the great value of his book.

BLAIR NILES

New York City
November, 1930

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PREFACE

THE year 1929 witnessed the opening of the air-mail route to Dutch Guiana, and it can be expected that before many years have passed the encroachments of industrial civilization will wipe out the last remnants of primitive West African culture in the New World. The Bush Negroes will be a vanished people, their culture gone, their habits and life forgotten. The African slave trade will then be only an historical memory.

Happily unaware of their probable extinction in a fast mechanizing world, these wild Bush Negroes still maintain in South America the ancient customs and venerable economy of the jungle dwellers of West Africa. Surinam is now an ethnological laboratory where one may study certain types of negroid jungle life in one of its purest forms. There the culture origins of the American Negro are preserved, as in a museum, by an historical accident.

In 1922, 1923 and 1925 I visited the South American tropics for the purpose of studying public health measures as applied to tropical disease. These studies took me to the border of the Bush Negro countries. Although my contacts at that time were very brief, and my knowledge of the Bush Negro altogether limited, I was determined to return and study further the lives and customs of a people who, although only

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IN NORTH-EASTERN South America, more precisely in the hinterland of Dutch Guiana, there is a unique civilization little known to the white men of this continent. We know much of the strange life of the Congo and of the fascinating customs peculiar to the inhabitants of the Malay jungles, for a number of explorers have brought from the Eastern tropics the interesting accounts of their experiences. But of the Surinam Bush Negro, Djuka, as he calls himself, who nearly two hundred years ago fought his way out of slavery, of the survival of his African customs in the jungles of South America, little has been told. 114 ● 101

The flush tides of imperialism have passed over these people, leaving them practically unaltered and unknown, unique among the Negro peoples of the world. They still maintain the life of jungle dwellers of the immemorial past.

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1 [For caption, see category 18, p.204.--Analyst]

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114 Today they are hunting game with the long bow. Tonight
101 their bodies will be contorted with the sinuous movements of African dances, to the dull thudding of the tomtom. The huts along the rivers of Surinam are like the huts beside the Congo, as they were in the days of Stanley and the early explorers. And in these huts, polygamously, the Bush Negroes live.

114 There is a vicious irony to that famous phrase which describes the backward peoples of the earth as "the white man's burden." The backward sections of the globe have been invaded for exploitation, and the exposure of the natives to civilization is invariably disastrous. In West Africa the process of civilizing the natives has in a single decade decimated many of the tribes. Exploitation has ravished them with disease and despair, the gifts of the white man to the sons of Ham. In strong contrast with this deplorable life along the Congo, the Bush Negroes of South America are a proud and hardy race, independent of the white man and usually contemptuous of him. They have come into contact with white civilization and survived. *They have fought the white man with his own weapons and defeated him, forcing him to sue for peace.* Transported to this hemisphere originally as slaves, they threw off their bondage and began life again in the New World. Slaves, they organized armies for conquest. Primitives, they were the first new people in the Western hemisphere to establish their independence.

They were enabled to do this by the wild and inaccessible jungle, the ancient abode of their ancestors. In the face of

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a desperate situation they established a civilization of their own, which, because of the implacable necessities of the jungle, differs widely from our own. The Djuka tribes are unique. To call them savage because they do not live as we do is an error. Their way is the way of the jungle; they cannot do otherwise and survive.

The Bush Negroes are blood relatives of the Negroes of the United States, only a few generations removed. The West African slavers that supplied the Carolinas and West Indies got their human cargoes from the same Guinea coast. In Jamaica, Haiti, and the United States, the Negroes have had too much contact with white civilization to retain their own characteristics. Among the Djukas the Negro strain remains practically pure. Here in the jungle the white man is weak and dependent, and the Djukas, having tasted the white civilization, reject it in favour of their own.

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His Nar- 649
rative of a Five Years' Expedition Against the Revolted Ne- 175
groes of Surinam in Guiana on the Wild Coast of South [illegible]
America is a record of strange happenings that could not occur again.

Many of the soldiers died en route, so reinforcements of three hundred men were sent from Amsterdam. Two hundred and fifty of these died on the way. The remainder were prepared for active service against the rebels. Acting with them were three hundred auxiliary troops, consisting of emancipated slaves under the command of white leaders. Such Negroes, freed for the purpose of fighting, were known as "rangers." They were given trousers and scarlet caps, armed with firelock and sabre, and taught the Dutch password, *"Orange!"* to distinguish them from rebel Negroes and prevent "disagreeable mistakes" during the fighting.

Under the command of the rebel leader Baron, whose very name sufficed to cause panic in any part of the colony, the Bush Negroes had established a strong settlement between the Cottica River and the seacoast. One proud rebel town was known as *Boucou,* which means *"Dust."* It was entirely surrounded by swamp, with secret paths under water, leading to gates in the palisade wall. Before the gates Baron placed swivel guns. On the whole it had the reputation of being "no contemptible fortification." There was another camp of rebel Negroes at Lee Shore, between the Surinam and Saramacca rivers. From these armed camps they made night forays into the plantations, robbing fields and stealing women.

Against Boucou the desperate Dutch sent a detachment

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Chapter Eight

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

THE Bush Negro family is not a family in our sense of the word. In the Surinam jungle the Djuka family is polygamous and matrilineal. The unit of society is the hut, where the mother and her children live.

In order to understand the marriage customs of the Bush Negro tribes it is first necessary to forget for the time being the system of patriarchal family life under which the white men of our age live. One unconsciously takes the customs of one's own society as a norm, and passes moral judgment on exotic customs by their deviation from that norm. This habit of thinking must be avoided as far as possible in considering a primitive society, though it is difficult even for an agile mind to make dispassionately the transition from one culture in which the father is dominant, to another, in which his position is not important. On the other hand, many of our

[For caption, see category 116, p. 204. — Analyst]

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114 prejudices about sex and marriage may become less rooted by a comparison with the customs of a primitive society.

611 428 The Djukas, like a number of other primitive tribes, reckon descent only through the female line; property rights are transmitted through the maternal side of the house. Fatherhood is a fact of relative unimportance.

595 Polygamy is the practice. Each wife lives in a separate hut (often in a separate village), which belongs to her because her husband built it for her. A man has as many wives as he wants, or can keep. The wives get along together fairly [152] amicably. The cancer of matrimonial jealousy characteristic of our own system, is of narrow range and effect among the Djukas.

596 604 The head of the family is not the father, but the mother's oldest male relative—her brother or her mother's brother. *The father is technically unrelated to his children.* As a matter of biological fact, he can never be sure of his paternity, whereas maternity is never in doubt. All children belong to their mother's family, and are subject to the authority of her brother or her maternal uncle. The latter is more closely related to them than any other male.

611 614 A group of families related through the female line constitute a *m'beh,* and several m'beh together make up a *lo,* or clan. These groups are all reckoned through the mother. Husband and wife may belong to different m'beh and lo, but children of the union belong only to their mother's group. At 593 604 first sight the father seems negligible in this arrangement, but it must be remembered that he is very likely the brother

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of some other woman, and exercises authority over her children rather than over his own.

The Djuka family, then, consists of a group of people all descended from a single woman, and related to each other through the female line. Whatever family authority exists resides in the mother's or grandmother's brothers; to them the children defer; from them the children will inherit property and title. The paternity of the children is unessential. This type of social organization is called matrilineal.

We should, perhaps, not expect to find romantic love, as we know it, among the Djukas. The peculiar transports and attenuated delights of romantic passion are a rather extraordinary phenomenon which, according to Briffault, does not exist outside of Western civilization. Romance requires a high development of individuality among women so that one may be desirable above all others. Where women are mutually interchangeable, romance cannot exist. The Djuka black does not love a woman; he loves women. Love among the Djukas is not a brainstorm but a physiological release, and marriage an economic device.

The young people have complete knowledge and some experience of sex at an extremely early age and are usually married at sixteen or seventeen. They are fairly promiscuous before marriage and extremely so afterward. This, again according to Briffault, is the rule in tribes retaining the matrilineal tradition. Since intercourse before marriage is a practice that the Djukas make little effort to restrain, sex is a common affair, not particularly connected with marriage.

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Appendix B

SYMBOLS IN DJUKA CARVINGS

In the work of the Djukas sexual symbols are frequent. These symbols must not be taken to indicate preoccupation with lascivious interests, for they are not always even representations of coitus or of sexual desire on the part of the male donor of the carved wooden piece upon which the symbols occur. They are sometimes expressions, through conventional and decorative signs, of the entire fertility cult, embracing the Earth Mother (Mama fu a gron) and kindred spirits. The figures marked with the letter P are taken from an article by Jonkheer Van Panhuys (see bibliography).

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/1/

Introduction

114 121 [101] After having left the plantation life in the colony of Surinam, I went back there in the beginning of 1851 with the plan, as the result of an agreement reached by me with a Belgian firm, to send shiploads of wood to the motherland and Belgium.

[123] I undertook my journeys to the Bush Negroes for this purpose and visited most of their dwelling places, something that entailed effort and great cost, since I distributed ample presents everywhere for the purpose of thereby acquiring their confidence, which they do not readily grant to Whites.

123 [576] [177] At my very first encounter I took the precaution of politely greeting each one of them without distinction and shaking their hands, a practice taken over by them from the Whites in the most recent times, which assures them of a feeling of good-will such as they experience among themselves but never from a White.

[352] I spoke to them frankly and in a friendly way, sat next to them in their huts on their low stools, and partook of their meals. In short -- I lived for a while without reserve or fear among them, paying amply for everything that I enjoyed in this way or that.

[273] I also permitted them, whenever they wanted to use any of my store of beverages, such as wine, beer, brandy, and gin, to ask me for it quietly, so that I would be able to order my servants to offer them what they had requested. In addition I supplied /2/ them amply with dram (1), herbs, and lead and, in order to show

1. A kind of inland rum (sugar spirits).

generosity to the women as well, frequently gave them and the children biscuits, cake, or some coins.

[121] In the beginning they were very reserved and mistrustful, but gradually, and after some difficult years, became more open with me, so that I, adapting myself entirely to their practices, was able to carry out my plan to have the necessary wood processed by them.

Djuka

/2 cont./

114 439 Much wood was ordered by me, and all that I received was paid for according to the actual value and in accordance with a concluded agreement.

123 I lent several of them money, in spite of already having been misled and cheated by them frequently, and continued to treat them amicably, to give them articles of clothing, and, indeed, sometimes for bad wood, which they tried to force upon me among the good pieces, even though I noticed this, I nonetheless continued to pay them decently just as for good wood, whereby I made them realize that I wanted to do business in an accomodating way.

So I learned more and more of their way of life, customs, and habits, respected these in everything, and finally succeeded in leading them back from various bad habits and shortcomings and to observe a more honest way of dealing with me. I was even able to bring it about so that I enjoyed a blind trust and in return was able to give my complete trust to some.

114 439 Since the beginning of 1857 I have been the owner of a sawmill with which the previous owner could do little or nothing because he always lacked the logs needed for the sawing of boards, whereas I, on the other hand, receive so much wood from the Bush Negroes that it is frequently too much for me.

123 439 Many of them who are not even my regular workmen refuse to sell their wood on the plantations and bring it all the way to my sawmill located near the town, because, so they contend, they also want to share in the privileges which the other Bush Negroes enjoy in accordance with the agreement concluded with me.

123 Most of the Bush Negroes know me, if not in person, at least by name.

I have also had to promise them that I will bring up my son /3/ so that later he will be able to take my place and deal with their descendants in the same manner as I am now doing with them, while they, too, drill their children to conduct themselves toward my son as the parents do toward me. In this way they want to make any split between my family and theirs impossible, even in the future.

/29 cont./

439 Thus it is known to me that they have gone to one or another plantation in order to sell timber, which they tie to their korjalen or canoes after having made it into rafts with bush ropes (tough liana stalks), and have misled the Europeans in a scandalous manner.

[283] [284] They make their squared timber into rafts in the following manner. Four thick strong round timbers are laid crosswise and tied together, two above and two under the korjaal; the timber is pushed in between these and fastened, so that the whole thing forms a firm long rectangle with the korjaal in the middle /30/ with which they make long journeys from the upper to the lower rivers. This timber that is made into rafts and carried along by the korjaal is called kokroko; they tie light and floating wood to long beams with bush rope (called boessitetei) (1); thus tied to the

1. From the copaiva.

heavy wood they drag it along down the river.

Chapter XXI

Understanding among Themselves

• 114 133 Not long ago I found myself among them on the river Upper Commewijne on the Tempati (a branch of the river named, on the left going upstream; this branch runs into the mountains, which are reported as ruddle mountains /roodenberg/.

114 648 Residing among them, I made many attempts to induce them to track down those in hiding who did not belong to their tribes and fugitives of a later time, and to make known to them that by governmental decree in the course of the year 1863, before the emancipation, a general amnesty regarding them had been issued, so that they could return to their former dwelling places without fear of punishment. The reason that induced me to acquaint them with this was that I saw in the return of these persons

/30 cont,/
in hiding a significant advantage for the colony, since the lack of workers in agriculture makes itself felt with increasing urgency.

Accordingly they promised to satisfy my wish by putting up the signs customary among them, which would make known to those in hiding my wishes to acquaint them with the good news.

In order to let those in hiding know that they were requested to come out of the forest, they go to work in the following manner.

They tie white and blue, also perhaps white and black patches of cotton half an ell long and three thumbs wide in Rhineland fashion to the upper branches of the trees, starting in the deepest part of the forest and progressing to the river /31/ bank. The little flags placed highest are of a dark color, while the patches tied progressively lower toward the river are white.

Those in hiding, who stay in the district and cross through the forest to hunt, discover these signs and see by them that there is something going on; either that others in hiding want to establish contact with them or that they have to fear danger.

The manner in which the signs are attached to the trees makes them understand that if they go more deeply into the forest there will be born for them a dark and dangerous future, whereas, if they can decide to go to the river bank they can walk a white, that is, a bright path and that, following the little white flags, they will find people who either want to make common cause with them or wish to give them important information.

Since these persons in hiding are constantly afraid of surprise attack or deception, trust in these signs is not always immediately established and thus at first only some of them go down with cunning and caution. When they come into the more inhabited districts, they watch and investigate everything that they wish to know; frequently this investigation extends all the way to Paramaribo. Now the Bush Negroes thought that if they followed their custom in this it would be clear to them why these signs had been placed in the bush and that as a result of these they would very quickly become acquainted with the declared amnesty.

I must add here also that in fact many fugitives or persons in hiding later came out of the forests, among whom must

/31 cont./

202 be mentioned in particular the man who caused so much of a stir,
648 Broos, chief of a camp of persons in hiding behind the plantation Rac a Rac, who came back followed by many.

I must confess that I have never seen this chief and was not involved in this event in any way; the question is, however, whether this Broos and his followers came back of their own accord, or whether they returned without fear of the Whites because of the reassuring signs set up at my request.

That the Bush Negroes attached to me complied with my request by the placing of /32/ signs is not to be doubted, but what outcome resulted from it cannot be said with certainty.

Chapter XXII

Deception Practiced toward Them

● 114 I said a few words in Chapter XX and earlier about the
648 deceptions that the Whites practiced with regard to the Bush Negroes. I was at first diffident about communicating the unvarnished truth about this. Since, however, this is not reported by me as being generally applicable, because, as in all things, here, too, favorable exceptions exist, I therefore regard it as my duty to make my experience known.

186 The Bush Negroes, it cannot be denied, as the result
648 of the manifold deceptions that they have experienced from the Europeans and other free inhabitants of this colony, have developed an aversion toward them. They therefore oppose deception with deception, and trick with trick.

439 It has become apparent to me that many of them, when
648 they arrive with timber rafts at the plantations in order to sell the timber, after having been deceived several times, make use of all kinds of tricks in order in their turn to deceive the Europeans. I leave now to one side the question as to which of the two parties is the principal or initiating cause and has the greater responsibility in these fraudulent transactions. When a family of Bush Negroes

/135/

Agriculture among the Bush Negroes of the Marowijne /Maroni/

by D. C. Geijskes (1)

1. Government biologist with the Department of Internal Affairs, Paramaribo.

1. Introduction

When one goes to the small communities of the inhabitants of the bush who live in the interior districts of Surinam, one quickly sees, upon examination, the basis on which the maintenance of such communities rests. The struggle for existence among primitive peoples covers the food supply and the resistance that can be offered against illness and pests. These two factors ultimately determine the birth surplus, which as a result expresses the possibility for survival.

Among the Bush Negroes we see in the course of the years an increase in the population, an advance, therefore, in spite of the obstructions of nature. But this advance creates new problems. It was during the Medical-Scientific Expedition to the Southern Border of Surinam, held from February to July, 1952, that, in conjunction with the medical investigation in the gathering of data about the "housekeeping" of the Bush Negroes of the Marowijne /Maroni/ and the Tapanahoni, we were struck above all by the problem of the food supply and the food itself. There is little sense in paying attention only to medical care unless at the same time attempts are made to improve the food.

An important part of the food supply is produced by agriculture. This supplies the Bush Negroes with the most, but not the best food. Next to it a number of forest products serve to provide for the need for food fats, while hunting and fishing must provide the protein.

/138 cont./

241 825 particular suffers greatly from this type of ant, but maize, tajer, and bananas are also eaten. This plague is so serious that the clearing of a new ground is partially determined by the occurrence of the nests of these ants at the place. Normally these nests lie fairly far apart in the forest, but as soon as the crops of the grounds come within the domain of the ants, the nests grow rampantly. In addition, at just about planting time the ants produce numerous sexual forms, which, as a result of the cleared lands, have a favorable opportunity to swarm and found new colonies. The leaf-cutting ants are therefore "Kulturfolger" /followers of culture/.

As a result of this plague of ants, it is usually not possible for the Bush Negroes to cut extensions to the existing grounds for longer than two to three years. After all, the kapoeweri of the abandoned pieces of ground functions then as a hiding place for the younger ant-nests, and one drags, as it were, the ant plague along with one. There is no combating the ants, and through impotence the Bush Negro is forced to yield the field. This flight before the ants consists in the search for new grounds farther into the bush or, in case this is no longer possible for some reason, in the occupation of new lands elsewhere along the river.

137 136 /139/ Stahel (1) has pointed to the fact that among the Bush

[113]

1. Het Bosnegervraagstuk en het Coronieplan /The Bush Negro Question and the Coronie Plan/, Department Landbouwproefstation Surinam /Department of Agriculture Research Station, Surinam/, Report No. 9, October, 1944, 28 pp.

Negroes the older grounds change into a low second-growth, called by him "ant-kapoeweri" /ant-bush/. In effect, in many places where a dense Bush Negro population is found, such a strip of second growth occurs along the rivers. According to Stahel, this inferior bush comes about through the presence of the great nests of leaf-cutting ants. According to his calculation, at a density of six ant nests per hectare (a maximum which is confirmed in the vicinity of Paramaribo, but which, according to my own observations in the Bush Negro lands,

13 [114]

/139 cont./

13 seems too high to me), the ants can bring into the soil each year two to three tons of leaf material per hectare. As a result the soil would be so enriched with humus and, in addition, through the construction of the numerous nest corridors, receive so much extra ventilation that the oxygen content and the microbiological condition of this soil would tend to differ from the mineral soils in which the virgin forest is rooted. As proof of this, it is stated "that even the oldest ant-kapoeweri directly behind the villages shows no tendency to grow into normal high forest" (p. 13).

● 114 137 136 It does not seem correct to me to ascribe this kapoeweri phenomenon only to the presence and the activity of the leaf-cutting ants. In my opinion the ants here constitute a troublesome contributing factor, for when the virgin-forest grounds are abandoned by the population and no new food material is available to the ants while the kapoeweri gradually grows into higher forest, then the balance in the ant population re-establishes itself. This process takes place at a slow rate, depending on the local circumstances, but it leads to the re-establishment of the original situation. There is, however, one condition connected with it, namely, that the forest be left in peace for a long enough stretch. 241 134 Now this last is not the case for the grounds area of the Bush Negroes. They return too soon (within ten years) to clear grounds again, with the consequence that the soil becomes too exhausted and the recovery of the forest becomes impossible.

171 241 137 [136] Proof for this viewpoint is already provided by Stahel (loc. cit.) in his consideration of the agriculture of the upland Indians. The absence of the ant-kopoeweri there is not a matter of a lesser ant infestation, as Stahel /140/ believes -- for in places this is equally serious -- but of a less intensive use of the forest lands. [161] 423 [361] The Indians are present in small numbers (a few hundred, as against thousands of Bush Negroes), while only communal plots are laid out for one village, and not different ones for each family. In addition, the Indians move frequently in order to find new hunting and fishing grounds.

/143 cont./

433 The solution of this problem in my opinion lies in this, that in the first place agricultural methods which are based upon a better and more economical use of the land must be practiced. It is the task of the Department of Agriculture to investigate which possibilities the lands permit and which crops can best be cultivated; it is for this reason that to these observations is added a list of crops presently in use among the Bush Negroes. A small team of young Bush Negroes will have to be trained by the Agricultural Information Service to familiarize them with the new methods.

Next to that, combating the ants will have to be seriously taken in hand in conjunction with the plans for a modified agriculture. For this, too, people from the area itself will have to receive training, and a permanent work-team will have to be formed. It is unfeasible and unnecessary to clear the entire area now in use. Insecticides such as carbon sulfate, methylbromide, and parathion -- applied with the necessary caution -- could be used with success in places.

/144/ The District Administration will also have to provide co-operation in order to find a compromise between the customary laws of the Bush Negroes and the new regulations to be introduced concerning the use of land.

7. The Cultivated Crops and Their Use

241 Although for the most part the cultivated plants are those [171] generally in use as agricultural crops in Surinam, there is still not [114] much known in detail concerning the crops that are cultivated by the Bush Negroes for their sustenance. Giving a general survey of these plants is thus necessary first of all, with a report on the way in which they are used.

[174] From a more historical point of view it is of interest to point to a number of important plants that are of African origin and have only still remained in use among the Bush Negroes, such as [177] agobo and bongila. Furthermore presumably there are still varieties of ordinary cultivated plants present here -- such as sugar cane, bacove and bananas, species of tajer and yams -- from the

/144 cont./
241 [177] time that the runaway slaves took these with them from the plantations then in existence.

It is therefore worthwhile in various respects to explore what is
241 114 [128] being cultivated. The following summary has been put together from the data of my own observations and from information provided by various Bush Negroes. This list is not complete; what is lacking, however, is probably of minor importance.

A. Cultivated Crops That Are Grown on the Food Grounds

244 [262] Bitter cassava (kasàba).

This is the most important crop, from which the cassava bread and kwak are made. One plants the shoots in December, but also in March and April. After 12 months the harvest begins; in case of a food shortage they are dug after only seven months. Yellow and white varieties are distinguished according to the color of the contents of the tubers. To the yellow varieties belong: witti tiki, which is kept on the grounds up to two years, blaka tiki, which stands on the grounds only one year, and taja tiki, which provides produce for a long time and is especially good for the making of kwak. To the white varieties belong: amosiang, sanang kasaba, [252] and domberi. Cassava bread is made from this. In the making of kwak all the colors are mixed together in order to obtain the desired yellow color. Each variety separately provides a less tasty product.

252 [184] On the Marowijne one makes more kwak (kwaka) than cassava bread, while on the Surinam River and the Saramacca only cassava bread /a map and Figs. 1-14 appear here/ /145/ is baked with the flour. Kwak is prepared in the following manner: The tubers, after they are peeled, are put in water in a korjaal (1) for two

1. korjaal = boat.

days and then grated. This grated cassava is then allowed to sour in a box or a korjaal; after that the grated cassava is expressed

[text continues on p. 21]

5: Hurault--1 KE-5 (1948-1959) 1959 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Rucuyen SR12

Introduction

During the expeditions of the Institut géographique national in French Guiana in 1948 and 1949, we lived in close contact with the Boni Refugee Blacks and the Oayana /Oyana/ Indians of the Upper Maroni. These populations present the remarkable peculiarity of belonging to two entirely distinct ethnic groups while living side by side, leading in general the same way of life, and having the same diet. Historical circumstances have thus joined together in the Upper Maroni the conditions of a rigorous biological experiment which, so far as we know, do not exist so distinctly in the other regions. In fact, wherever two different ethnic groups coexist, they usually do not have either the same habitat or the same way of life; for example, on the coast of Surinam the Indonesians live mostly on the rice plantations and the Blacks in the towns, under quite different conditions of habitat, diet, and hygiene; under these conditions, the differences observed on the level of pathology and demography are difficult to interpret.

Doctor André Sausse, who accompanied us, studied the Boni and the Oayana Indians on the medical level; he submitted evidence that these two populations presented a distinct pathology having profound repercussions on their demographic situation (1). During this period we lacked the time to substantiate these data by a census and by a systematic interrogation of the women. We were able to carry out this work at the close of the expedition for the delimitation of the southern frontier in January, 1957. The data collected have been verified and completed in the course of two other expeditions made for the Office de la recherche scientifique dans les territoires d'Outre-Mer /Bureau of Scientific Research in the Overseas Territories/ (October 1957 – February 1958 and

1. Dr. André Sausse, Populations primitives du Maroni /Primitive populations of the Maroni/, Larose, Paris, 1951.

B
R /509 cont./
101 October 1958 – January 1959), expeditions whose principal aim
114 was the sociological study of these populations.
121

/510/

Social Structure and Way of Life

B
101 The Boni Refugee Blacks. The Boni are one of the above-mentioned
[175] tribes of the Refugee Blacks, reconstituted in the course of the
eighteenth century by rebel African slaves who escaped from
3 Surinam plantations (Dutch Guiana).
[131] These tribes (Saramaka, Djuka, Paramaka, Boni) live for the
[161] most part along the rivers of the interior of Surinam. They group
together a total of 25,000 persons.
B
161 With very rare exceptions, the Refugee Blacks are pure Africans.
[144] These populations, vigorous and well adapted to the country, have
experienced in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries
a remarkable demographic increase, attested to by all the authors.
Descended from small rebel groups which could not have contained
more than a few hundred women, they are now estimated at more
than 25,000 persons.
B
162 The Boni of the Upper Maroni, the subject of the present study,
103 number approximately 800, of whom 660 are on the French bank
[161] (the villages of Boniville, l'Enfant Perdu, Loka, Asisi, Papaïton,
and Kormotibo) and 140 on the Surinam bank (the village of Kotika).
These villages were established long ago.
B
613 Each of them groups together a matrilineage, i.e., the
621 descendants in the uterine line of one single founding ancestress;
769 certain villages know their genealogy in its entirety back to this
ancestress, who must have lived at the end of the eighteenth
century. The members of the lineage are united by the cult of the
B
[622] ancestors, which binds them firmly to their natal village and to
[793] their land. The social system is based essentially on this cult,
the chief of the village being above all the priest of the ancestors.
B
581 Strictly speaking, there is no marriage, but only an acknowl-
edged concubinage which entails neither a contract between the

/513/

B R 146 The scarcity of lipide foods, and, among the Boni, the low consumption of fruit might cause one to fear vitamin deficiencies. B In fact, there are no signs of it.

B R 575 Body hygiene is excellent; Blacks and Indians bathe several times a day and are very fastidious about their persons.

B R 433 In summary, there is no appreciable difference in the customary activities, agriculture, hunting, and fishing, of the two populations. There is one in economic activity. B R 461 Among the Boni, who have a greater need for imported objects, the adult men work [465] for wages four to five months per year on the average. These jobs are very laborious and performed under bad dietary conditions, whereas the Indians rest when they are not occupied with their customary tasks, sometimes spending entire days stretched out in the hammock.

B R 177 The two populations have been in close contact for a long time. B R 177 The Indian villages farthest downstream have immediate contact with the first crop plantings of the Boni. Without having 648 any tendency to merge (their characters and their customs are too different), Boni and Oayana have maintained regular relations since the end of the eighteenth century, doing a little trade in imported articles exchanged for hammocks and dogs trained for hunting. They often visit each other, and nothing stops the spread of illness from the one group to the other.

B R 105 In fact, the way of life of the two groups is the same, the 182 environmental conditions have the same influence, and the differ- 164 ences which are observed in the pathology can only be attributed to a different sensitivity with regard to the principal illnesses.

B 164 Pathology of the Boni. We shall briefly summarize here the ob- [114] servations of Dr. A. Sausse in his work Populations primitives du Maroni.

The pathology of the Boni is characterized by:

-- a resistance to malaria, which means that if the children have bad attacks an immunity will develop with age; the size of the spleen diminishes regularly from child to adult. The adults have only episodical attacks which are not serious; in particular

B
R /534 cont./

14 In the whole of the Amazonian forest these facts have been
16 observed since the seventeenth century and have led to the re-
182 placement of Indians by slave manpower imported from Africa.
114 The course taken in denying the biological realities and wishing
to find at any cost a purely sociological explanation has inspired
in recent years an ingenious explanation by several authors:

The success of African manpower was, according to them, due to the fact that the Blacks had a civilization closer to that of the Europeans, whereas the Amerindians were more hunters-fishermen than agriculturalists.

B
R
[105] For any observer of good faith, the Indians of Guiana and
R the Blacks of the forests of the Congo and Gabon are largely
[433] on the same technological and cultural level. The Indians are
[361] certainly cultivators just as experienced as the Negroes; is one to forget that it was they who taught the rest of the world the greater part of the important tropical crops: manioc, maize, cotton, tobacco, and so many others? Hunting and fishing for them is only a secondary means of support; it is their instability,
R their lack of attachment to the soil, which may create an
[136] illusion on this point. It can be explained to a certain extent
[361] by the small size of the kinship groups: an ecological factor which does not exist in Black Africa must also be taken into account, the manioc ant, which swarms in particular in the zones habitually cultivated, promoting a seminomadism (18).

B
[136] 18. This factor plays only a secondary role,
[361] since the Refugee Blacks despite the manioc ant, maintain villages of permanent residence, only changing their crop plantings, but it is certain that it promotes the dispersion of the groups and seminomadism.

R
14 These considerations do not pretend to give a complete ex-
16 planation of the social behavior of the Indians of the Amazonian
182 forest. The biological characteristics of the group are only one of the factors of this behavior, parallel to many others, notably

/1/

INTRODUCTION

114 101 [122] In the course of three missions of the Institut Géographique National in 1948, 1949, and 1952, we lived in close relationship with the tribe of the Boni, who supplied us with the bearers and boat crews indispensable for travel in the country. From the first contacts, we felt a deep interest in this worthy people, made up in the 18th century of rebel slaves escaped from the plantations of Surinam.

114 [121] Taking advantage of the rare moments of respite allowed us by our work, we tried to study the various aspects of their material, social, and religious life. The men who accompanied us were for the most part young men who had only a limited understanding of the tradition of their group: in addition, the geographic work compelling constant moves in the uninhabited forest, investigator and informants were more often than not prey to worry and fatigue.

[101] [121] At the end of the mission to fix the French Guiana-Brazil boundary in January, 1957, we were able to undertake a systematic investigation based on a detailed inventory of the population of the villages.

114 101 [122] A fifth mission made under the aegis of the Institut Français d'Amérique Tropicale (IFAT) from October, 1957 to February, 1958 permitted us to fill part of the gaps in our work. Some complementary data were collected in October-November, 1958 on the occasion of another trip devoted mainly to the study of the Indians of the Upper Maroni.

128 The present work is exclusively devoted to the social life of the Boni. The information we assembled on their material life and their art, as well as their demographic situation, will be the subject of separate publications. /blank page/

C E L R 101

Boni
Emerillon SQ8
Rucuyen SR12
Carib SR9
Locono SR10

/11 cont./

3) The autochthonous Indians are represented on the Maroni Basin by three groups:

C [131] [162] [133] [177] [178]

—The Arawak and the Kalifna (Galibi) (about 500 persons) live downstream from Saint-Laurent; they live in symbiosis with the population of the city, whom they supply with fish and manioc. A century of contact with the Creole population has produced a certain alteration in their customs and traditional way of life, but the essentials of their tribal organization remain intact.

R [131] [162] [178]

—The Oayana /Oyana/ or Roucouyennes /Rucuyen/ (about 250 persons) live on the Litani upstream from the Boni with whom they are in close relationship. They have not undergone any alteration in their race or their way of life.

E [131]

—The Emerillon, who belong to the Tupi-Guarani group, form a small grouping on the way to extinction.

B 114

The Refugee Blacks. —Ethnic origin. No comprehensive anthropological study has as yet been undertaken on the Refugee Blacks. Not possessing the specialized knowledge necessary for tackling this study, we have left it entirely aside. Besides, we doubt that it would give important detailed information on the ethnic origin of the Refugee Blacks. Study of archive documents concerning the slave trade would certainly give more particulars; it is certain from now onwards that their origin is very diverse; the slave traders took on provisions principally on the coast of West Africa, but also in the Congo and in present-day Angola; the African words figuring in the present dialects come from the populations of these various regions. So it is not surprising to meet rather variable skull forms and statures among the Refugee Blacks.

B 175 144 [192]

B 141

The Refugee Blacks are in general of medium stature, that of the adult men being between 1 meter 60 and 1 meter 75; the average is a little below 1 meter 70.

/29 cont./

121 This is what necessitates as precise an inventory as possible of the population in its present state.

61 Matrilineal kin groups among the Djuka and Saramaka Refugee Blacks.
114 Authors who have described the social structure of the Djuka and
184 Saramaka, groupings appreciably more numerous than the Boni, have also called attention to the use of the words lo and bɛɛ, but give them a completely different meaning.

194 The organization they describe can be summarized thus:
571 Before making up tribes, the rebels lived in small groups
621 near the plantations from which they had escaped; these groups of composite origin were designated by the word lo which means: troop, band; the same word is used to designate a band of animals.

[162] These rebels used to belong to all the nations of the west
[103] coast of Africa. In spots there may have been an attempt at regroupings of elements belonging to the same nation, as proven by the village names Loango, Dahomey, among the Saramaka.
[622] But the majority of these small groups were very probably of heterogeneous origin; in each of these lo, the bravest and most capable was designated as head.

[648] After the recognition of the Djuka and Saramaka by the
[167] government of Surinam and their regrouping on the great rivers of the interior, these groups kept their unity since they had a de facto organization and leaders. They were naturally designated by the name of the plantation they had come from. We say for example Dju nɛ̃nge for the former slaves of the Jews, Kɔ̃pani nɛ̃nge for the former slaves of the Compagnie des Indes Orientales /East India Company/. /30/

174 In the course of the 19th century the total number of Refugee
613 Blacks increased very rapidly under the influence of a high birth
614 rate. The lineages in the proper meaning of the term bɛɛ, mean-
621 ing the descendants of the same ancestress, took on sufficient im-
57 portance to constitute distinct social units. They grouped in
1161

/30 cont./

174 separate villages and the more important even burst out into
613 several villages whose heads were recognized as "captains" by the
grand man and then by the government. The number of Djuka
614 captains recognized by the government of Surinam has not stopped
621 growing; it was 28 these last few years.

571 The lo no longer represented an effective social unit, but its members kept common worships. For example, it is said that
[188] the Dju nẽnge go each year as a ritual to get earth from the Savane des Juifs /Savanna of the Jews/ where their ancestors were slaves.

[114] This explanation seems probable. The kin-group is not the only social unit known to Africans; the bond between man and land has equal importance in their eyes; the fact that their fathers had lived together, that they had been buried in the same cemetery created a among the rebel slaves a de facto bond which was able to suffice, at the beginning of the rebellion, to found villages and a social organization.

[114] However, this theory cannot be entertained without reservations. It has not been possible to verify it by systematic studies, the Djuka and Saramaka having firmly opposed until now any ethnographic investigation involving the statement of genealogies and the inventory of the population of the villages.

[184] It contradicts what we have pointed out among the Boni. In that group six great lineages are counted, of which four (Dju, Kotika, La Paix, Dikan) have a name also alluding to the plantations from which their ancestors fled.

Nevertheless it is certainly a question of lineages in the proper meaning of the term, and nobody remembers that any other organization ever existed. Also, in the absence of systematic studies of the Djuka and Saramaka, the problem of the origin of
[184] their kin groups remains obscure. The future will permit verifying one or the other of the two hypotheses:

/42 cont./

601 128 So-and-so, and So-and-so, can be regarded as sure. On the other hand, we have considered that there was a break in the genealogy when, going back in time, we arrived at this single datum: Ma X... was the sister of Ma Y..., for it could be a question of kinship in the classificatory sense.

No form of birthright existing among the Boni, there is some uncertainty about the order of birth of brothers and sisters for persons long dead. We have adopted the order kept by oral tradition without trying to rectify it.

613 814 829 In many African populations a special tradition is connected with perpetuating the memory of the founder, at least his name, the place of his grave. With the present-day Boni absolutely nothing like this is found; they are not concerned in any way with the true foundress of their lineage; no memory, no legend, not even a name has come down to them. It even seems as though these distant ancestors interest them little because they are less able to act in behalf of their present-day descendants. Indeed, with each new generation the memory of an ancient one dies out.

193 [126] On our first trip in 1948 we called attention, unfortunately without noting them down precisely, to /43/ very interesting oral traditions going back to the time of slavery, especially the names of the slave-owners who showed themselves to be the most cruel. In [814] 1952 the last old man who knew them had died; the very memory of what he had said was already effaced.

829 602 As a matter of fact, Boni thought, strictly practical and utilitarian, is concerned principally with keeping the memory of the part of the genealogy indispensable to the living to know their kinship ties. Memory of women whose posterity has died out and of men who did nothing remarkable is dead from the second generation on.

114 613 Since none of the travelers of the 19th century understood the importance of taking genealogies, it is probable that the names

/43 cont./

114 613 of the true foundresses and the circumstances of the formation of the lineages (invaluable information which must still have been present in the memory of the old men at the end of the last century) are lost forever.

128 601 In order to simplify the drawing up of the genealogical tables, we have eliminated individuals deceased before adult age.

128 551 601 162 101 Names. To insure the necessary anonymity to our informants without diminishing the accuracy of the statement, we have changed a large part of the names. The fictitious names under which individuals are designated in the genealogical tables as well as in the inventory of the population were mostly taken from the Djuka, who belong to the same cultural and linguistic group; in other cases, in order "to figure" the census we used a more complex process consisting in exchanging the names of two persons. Children younger than 15 are designated simply by an initial (1).

[648] [123] 1. It is particularly disagreeable to the Refugee Blacks to have their children's names known by Europeans, with the exception of the doctor. All systematic questioning on this subject runs into clear hostility.

114 609 Despite these precautions, we recommend that travelers provided with this work make no allusion in front of the Boni to the facts related in it; the Refugee Blacks are very proud and cannot allow an outsider to penetrate forthwith into their family privacy. That would provoke lively hostility toward the indiscreet person and would hinder later work.

114 128 The table of correspondence between true and fictitious names is held at the disposal of sociologists who may wish to conduct studies on the Boni.

6:Hurault--108 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

/111/

CHAPTER V

STUDY OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF LANDS AMONG THE LINEAGES (1)

1. Part written with the cooperation of Mr. P. Frenay, assistant technical geographer.

Appropriation of Land in the Customary Law of the Refugee Blacks

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The fundamental principle of the customary law of the Refugee Blacks as far as land is concerned is that only the lineage can retain real rights. The individual can hold only a right of use, which disappears at his death.

This right concerns exclusively the working of the land for plantings and does not extend, as we shall see further on, to hunting and gathering.

Each lineage possesses recognized rights over certain portions of land, more or less well delimited according to the density of the population, but known by all and giving no occasion (at least in Boni country) for any dispute.

Right of use. Within these zones there is joint possession of the rights among all the members of the lineage; each one has rights of use over a certain number of "clearings" which he habitually uses in turn to make his plantings.

The right of use can be given away: for example, if someone thinks he will no longer need a clearing he was habitually cultivating, he gives the right to utilize it to another member of the lineage.

Boni

Rucuyen SR12
Oyana

/97 cont./

R 105 [361] The Oayana Indians are half nomadic, moving their villages every ten years on the average. They have neither a permanent center of peopling, a place of worship, nor a cemetery; they do not have ancestor worship, at least no concept involving a precise and permanent tie between the living, the dead, and the land.

R 114 182 [136] This state of things has been attributed by several authors to the geographical environment and especially to the ravages of the manioc ant; the manioc ant, swarming particularly in formerly cultivated zones, makes nomadism advantageous. From this would have resulted a social structure and a mode of living adapted to these special conditions.

B 114 769 182 The example of the Refugee Blacks shows conspicuously that these considerations, in spite of their undeniable interest, do not constitute an explanation of general scope; for the Refugee Blacks, the only social ties conceivable flow from ancestor worship; above all the imperatives of material life the individual feels as a primordial duty the act of attaching himself to the village of his ancestors, to the land they cleared off and which remains under their protection.

B 182 241 423 613 The difficulties inherent in the geographical environment have been easily surmounted or gotten around. Rather than vast zones with one single holder, each lineage divided its finage into sectors distant from one another. If these zones become temporarily unusable, the Boni go to create farming habitations on the upper course of the river, without ceasing because of this to reside habitually in the village of their ancestors; there results from this no other constraint but losing two weeks each year in going and coming on the river.

/134 cont./

429 561 861 582 Until very recent times the authority of the guardian had remained very strong and was prolonged very late; he had the right to strike his ward to make him obey, and he exercised his powers until the time when, judging the child's education finished, he authorized him to marry, which formerly seldom happened before 25-27 years.

Fintiman (of Boniville), about 50 years old in 1958, tells that his father, entrusted with his upbringing, did not authorize him to marry before he was completely established as a carpenter and boat-builder, at about the age of 27. Until that age he remained subject to the most tyrannical authority; his father intended especially to forbid him to go out in the evening, and in order to carry on a clandestine affair he had to use nocturnal fishing expeditions as a pretext!

429 884 When a boy's guardian judges his education finished, he helps him to build his house and gives him tools, a trunk containing clothes, and a hammock. Henceforward the boy must make his own way in life.

429 576 601 All during his lifetime he will continue to show the greatest respect to the person who raised him and often, speaking of that person, he will say: "my father" or "my mother."

601 When a Refugee Black says in the course of a conversation, "My father used to do this," he often means the man who brought him up; if he wishes to speak of his true father, he will say, "My own father who made me." Likewise when he says "My grandfather," he usually means a great-uncle. This confusion makes research on family life risky as long as one does not possess any census by names; apparently it has led several authors into error, making them believe that among the Refugee Blacks the father brings up his children himself, when this is on the contrary the exception.

128 114 593

/134 cont./

429 The guardian continues to have a certain power all his life over his ward become adult. He is the conciliator to whom one applies first if there is any complaint about his ward.

This power of conciliation is bequeathed by the guardian at his death, as is the guardianship itself.

593 Role of the mother. For the Refugee Blacks, the sacred tie is
613 pre-eminently the one which attaches them to their mother and
152 through her to the ancestors of the lineage. It is manifested with respect to the mother by a delicate and deep feeling of affection which applies also, less directly, to the close relatives on the maternal side and to all the members of the lineage. It is not
[601] idly that within the lineage the men call one another brothers; the obligations /135/ they have toward one another are accepted by all with joy, and each tries his best to fulfill them, for he transposes to them the sentiment of love which he feels toward his mother.

• 114 The term matriarchy has often been used wrongly with re-
562 gard to the Refugee Blacks, letting people believe that the woman
593 exercises authority there; this is an error, the woman does not enter their councils and from a political point of view does not exist in their eyes; the woman has influence and authority only as mother, and over her own children.

593 The mother's authority remains very great over her sons after they have become men; none of them will undertake an important enterprise or leave for a long trip without consulting his mother; if she is absolutely opposed to the project, he will scarcely dare go on with it. We heard in December, 1952 a man of 45, M..., serious and intelligent, say to us with regret: "I would certainly go with you as far as Cayenne, but my mother does not wish it."

/138 cont./

613 614 In general, one can say that the law of exogamy is maintained firmly within the fractions which know completely their genealogy. Union between classificatory "brothers" and "sisters" belonging to different fractions remains always prohibited in principle, but as for all the institutions of the Refugee Blacks, the prohibition ceases to be observed if fear of suprahuman sanctions weaken. /139/

This is what explains the difference in attitude among the [784] lineages. In the Awara Bakka lineage, people do not remember that marriages between fractions may have been followed by maladies or misfortunes, and for this reason they are no longer feared.

In the Kotika lineage it was the same, but an event which [789] took place in 1958 threw consternation. A young woman, Awini [784] (K1, E37, Boniville), died suddenly, and divination showed that [761] she had been struck down by the kunu for having married her classificatory brother Sintamann (K3, E145, Boniville). However, they belonged to two different fractions and their common relationship was the farthest removed possible in the lineage (tenth-degree relatives).

684 688 784 Pikadu. The offense against exogamy, pikadu (1), incest in the

1. This word appears to come from the Portuguese pecado, sin.

broad sense, is considered an offense against society and against religious law; it exposes the lineage to the vengeance of the gods who exercise the kunu on it. But in the thought of the Refugee Blacks, if incest unleashes the functioning of existing kunu, it [114] does not create new ones. What has been written on this subject by several authors seems inexact to us, at least for the Boni. [761] In the example put forth above Awini's death was attributed to the kunu brought to bear for a long time by the yɔrka of a man assassinated in former times by a member of the lineage.

/140/

684 This prohibition is of a purely religious nature and does
688 not entail any social sanctions; those concerned are convinced
784 that in such a case a suprahuman sanction would strike them in the form of sickness or accident.

582 Prohibitions limiting marriage. Outside of the great interdiction,
[613] pikadu, which is attached to unions within one matrilineage and one patrilineage, two prohibitions limiting marriage are found among the Refugee Blacks, which they express thus:

[595] --I cannot have two wives at the same time in the same
[587] lineage. For example I am forbidden to marry two "sisters" at the same time, but if I break with my wife, I may marry her classificatory "sister" or any other woman of the same lineage;

[835] --I may not have relations, even passing ones, with a
[587] woman who has been married to my brother by the same mother; in particular, if my brother has just died, I shall not be able to marry his widow.

The Boni are not capable of explaining the deep reasons for these interdictions, but they interpret them as purely social
[684] and not religious prohibitions. The offender is simply threatened with being beaten.

[171] The first of these rules seems very widely accepted in Black Africa, as much in patrilineal societies as in a matrilineal system.

[171] The second of these rules is characteristic in the Akan (Agni, Baoulé) culture area and shows that the family custom of the Refugee Blacks is related much more directly to that of the Agni-Ashanti group than to that of the Dahomey.

184 One can note that this rule is exactly contrary to the
587 Saramaka custom, which obliges the widow to marry one of the
114 brothers of the dead man; this custom has been interpreted by several authors as coming from imitation of the levirate of the Jews, with which certain rebels were acquainted (it is known that among the slaveowners there were many Jews).

/167 cont./

764 787 761 The bearers are changed and the interrogation continues, still as confused as before. Captain Tafanié, who arrives in the midst of all this, thinks that the dead woman does not want to speak in front of such a large crowd. He asks her to designate which of the people present will form a small group. I see the front of the coffin stop in front of an old Saramaka named Yasu, then successively in front of about ten of those present of various ages and origins. They stand up, take their little benches in their hands, and go to join Tafanié under a large tree in a spot to the side; the interrogation resumes; by nightfall a sure fact has been established: Way was killed by a god. They will resume the next day in order to find out what god is concerned and how to appease him.

764 [114] Notes taken at the funeral ceremonies for Kotoïda (Afi lineage) October 22-23, 1956 (2nd and 3rd days after death).

I arrive at Asisi on the 22nd at eight o'clock. Kotoïda died on the twentieth; the first part of the ceremony has been finished.

[692] It is Tafanié, head of Papaïston village, who presides over the lānti kuutu.

Tafanié himself has directed the making of the coffin (he is a kisimā) with the help of boards held in reserve on the spot. The work was finished at nine o'clock in the morning.

The body was placed in the coffin immediately, and after the presentation of the pieces of cloth, the wings were nailed. /168/

When I arrive at the wharf, the coffin is placed in the mortuary shed. The near relatives of the deceased (sons, daughters, and nephews) as well as the husband and the co-wife compelled to take part in the mourning are seated in their hammocks attached to the posts of the shed. The first-mentioned manifest no apparent sorrow whatever. Husband and

/182 cont./

965 Then they address the dead person in the name of the people of his village: "We have done with thee, stay there where God has placed thee."

The spouse in mourning is again bathed in the river by old women who have themselves gone through mourning.

[969] [975] Then they address the yɔrka of the ancestors and the entities of the Beyond who are imagined to have come in a crowd: "Ala sani di kɔm ya, yu mu luku ala ãŋga bū; u kaba ãŋga yu; yu sa: waka ala peesi; (Each one of the beings who have come, be benevolent toward us all; we have finished with thee, thou canst go anywhere)."

On the seventh day most of those present begin to leave. An intimate ceremony brings the dead person's near relatives together in the very house where he died. They weep and lament one last time. Then a last offering of food is made in the same house, and they repeat the adjuration: "We have done with thee; stay where God has placed thee."

[968] [613] [431] The eighth day, the spouse whose mourning has just been lifted is conducted solemnly back to his village by the people of the dead person's lineage. He is congratulated, he offers food and drink to all those present. What he might have had left of savings disappears on this occasion.

He must sleep three nights in his village, still without being able to have relations with a woman. When this time limit has gone by, he comes to give back the red clothes which the dead person's lineage had lent to him. Only then is he free.

● [114] Notes taken in Boniville in November, 1957 on the occasion of the lifting of mourning for Béniti. This festival is given for the lifting of mourning for ○ Béniti (Dju, E5, living in Boniville, † in 1955 at 75), of △ Tito (Kotika, Boniville, † in 1955 at 15), and of △ G..., boy of ten, son of a woman of the village of L'Enfant Perdu (Dip. I), dead in Boniville where he was reared by Térésa. The festival is given more than two years after death. Sometimes, when there is no spouse subjected to mourning

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581 The Refugee Blacks change their attitude immediately as soon as one speaks to them about marriage. Men and women are unanimous in considering marriage as an intolerable violation of individual freedom and as a tie without purpose; they talk about it with veritable indignation, even having the feeling of an offense against morality.

Cults of Possession

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794
[171] The phenomena of possession are extremely frequent among the Blacks of America (possession by saints or inspiration by the Holy Spirit among the Blacks of Brazil and the United
[171] States, voodooism in Haiti). With the Refugee Blacks they make up the very base of religious life to the point of being the normal means of communication between the gods and men; they have profound effects on all social life.

The cults of possession practiced by the Refugee Blacks of Guiana differ from those of the Blacks of Brazil and Haiti and do not appear to be directly connected with the African cults which have been described.

[128] We shall give here only very concise information about the ritual of these cults and we shall mainly try to show their place in relation to the institutions of the Refugee Blacks, and their functioning.

789 Possession is believed to be the entrance into a man of a suprahuman entity (divinity, spirit of an ancestor) which, during a variable length of time generally rather short (a few minutes to several hours), uses the body of this man and expresses itself through his mouth. They say that the man has become the horse - hasi - of the divinity. They also say: "Such-and-such a divinity entered his head." The possessed person is called
[114] gadu mã (gadu umã for a woman). This word has been translated improperly as "priest" in the first works treating of the Refugee Blacks.

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787 [171] The phenomena of possession exist among other populations of the Guianas and especially among the Amerindians, but among the Refugee Blacks they have special and well-defined forms.

--For the duration of possession, the ordinary consciousness of the man is totally abolished. When he comes back to himself, he no longer remembers anything and the others present have to repeat to him what the divinity revealed. This total [171] loss of consciousness during possession appears to be a very constant phenomenon with the Blacks, in Africa as much as in [114] America. Professor de Goeje calls attention to the fact that the Indian medicine man, on the contrary, does not lose /200/ consciousness during his trances and is supposed to receive, himself, the revelations of the spirits.

When a man is possessed by a divinity, in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks he is no longer there; what his body may do is not attributed to him at all. They say: "The gadu does this, says that, dances in such a way." If the gadu hurt someone (but that practically never happens) or broke something, its bearer would not have any responsibility.

787 198 [176] --The divinity expresses itself in a language peculiar to it; we shall see further on that there are four categories of divinities likely to become incarnate in men, which corresponds to four secret languages of which in practice only two are known by the Boni, at least by the oldest among them.

The bearer of the divinity, in his usual state of consciousness, knows in general this language, which he has learned from a teacher if it is a matter of a possession desired by him and obtained with the help of definite practices.

But there are also numerous cases of unprovoked possession (in the kunu especially) and people state that in this case the divinity speaks its language just as well, although its bearer has never learned it;

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796 613 428 [787] Still, they assume that the gods that have entered a matrilineage tend to be transmitted within this group. If, for example, a woman is possessed by a Papa gadu, at her death she must bequeath it in the same way as her property, and she can bequeath it only to someone of her lineage.

We have seen in studying the transmission of the god of Kotoïda († 1956), that only the women of the Afi lineage to which she belonged could inherit.

796 613 784 Even if the god is not bequeathed, which sometimes happens, if it exercises the kunu, it will manifest itself sooner or later in a member of the lineage. But long years may pass before it shows itself. This conception is absolutely clear to the Refugee Blacks, and furthermore, if it did not exist, the [114] [428] idea of the kunu would be without support. People have therefore wrongly believed in a transmission of gods from father to son.

346 787 794 613 Material organization of cults. A material organization of the cults of possession exists within the limits of the localized lineage (lo). This organization is completely independent of the apprenticeship of these cults. It permits the members of the lineage to easily practice cults they have received anywhere, on their own responsiblity.

In each lo there exists in general one single chapel (obia ɔsu) for all the divinities of the same category.

For example in the Awara Bakka lo quarter in Asisi (140 persons), for about 15 women having a Papa gadu, there exists only a single one. There is an obia ɔsu for the Ampuku (three or four possessed persons) and another for the Kumẽnti (about ten possessed people).

The chapel of the Papa gadu is placed under the responsibility of the head of the lo. On this subject it is to be noted that the individualized lineages Aw.B.3 and Afi, which however have separate gods, are included in this organization.

/210 cont./

976 [576] character, touchy and vindictive. In speaking of them one says Papa gadu (papa does not mean "father"; it is a term of respect used for important personages (2)). They are believed

• 114 175 976

2. This is the interpretation given by the Refugee Blacks. However, 18th-century documents on the origin of the slaves draw attention to the existence of an African tribe called Papa. Allusions contained in documents of the archives of Surinam, recently studied by Madame Silvia W. de Groot, would tend to identify the Papa with one of the populations of present-day Dahomey. In this hypothesis, the cult of the papa gadu would represent an archaic form of the Dahomey cult of the snake gods.

976 They are believed
[825] to have as habitual bearers the boa snakes (dagowe) (3) which

3. This word appears to be the deformation of the Dahomey word dɛ̃gbe.

are not to be confused with the great water snakes (anaconda) [824] that the Refugee Blacks call mboma sineki. They may also reside in silk-cotton trees (kankan tree) and in the trees called katu udu (Bombax surinamiensis).

[787] The Vɔɔdɛ̃ which incarnate themselves in humans may be of either sex; if a male god is concerned, it is called "tata vɔɔdɛ̃."

/215 cont./

787 789 [114] in their hands and utter adjurations. We saw this rite performed in 1949 but without being able to observe the exact details.

787 791 The frequency of the phenomena of possession and the importance accorded to them imprint a remarkable character on the religious life of the Refugee Blacks: all these manifestations have for each one the character of obvious material fact. How, then, doubt that one lives with the gods, sees them, and [117] speaks to them? Because of this fact the society of the Refugee Blacks is utterly impermeable to European influences.

787 824 Some plants utilized in the rites of possession. The preparations with which the possessed people "wash" their bodies consist of macerations of leaves. The plants used, which for the most part belong to the secondary flora which develops in the old clearings, are very numerous. However, some are regarded as [789] having a very unique power. The first five especially are utilized by all the Boni to "wash off the Ampuku" when they have slept a night in the bush.

Aluku Name	Identification (1)	Use
[122]	1. Identification by Mr. Hoock, botanist connected with the Institut français d'Amérique tropicale (IFAT) in Cayenne.	
Lebi katu	cotton	cult of the Ampuku
Kɔnɔpo wiwi	Ayenia atrorubens (Sterculiaceae)	—— /216/
Foo kɛ̃kɛ̃	Tiaridium indicum (Borraginaceae)	——
Sume wiwi	Ocimum sanctum (?) (Labiaceae)	——

/217 cont./

If someone marries a girl, he must not only pay her mother the price of virginity but must also pay the girl's akka. For that he offers white beads and cloth which the bride will wear, as well as sweets which will be consumed by her. If the price of virginity were not paid, the woman's akka, humiliated, might make her sick or kill her.

/218/ There are seven categories of akka, masculine and feminine, one for each day of the week.

Crevaux in 1877 was able to establish the complete list(1):

1. This conception is widespread in the Agni-Ashanti culture area, among the Ewé and Mina, and as far as western Dahomey. The names reported among the Mina correspond very exactly, except for some differences in pronunciation, to the ones kept by the Boni.

	Men	Women
Sunday	Kwasi	Kwasiba
Monday	Kɔdyo	Adyuba
Tuesday	Kwami	Abeniba
Wednesday	Kwaku	Akuba
Thursday	Yao	Yaba
Friday	Kɔfi	Afiba
Saturday	Kwamina	Amba

All these names are known to the Boni, but none of our informants was capable of reciting the complete list. It is well understood that a name like Kɔfi, Kɔdio /sic/, etc. is the akka's name and not at all the man's name (2).

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114 784 The various works treating of the Refugee Blacks point out well the importance of the kunu, but it seems to us that the functioning of this institution (for in fact a social institution is certainly concerned here) has not been clearly understood.

784 613 A kunu is attached to a matrilineage in the literal sense (b&s). It extends obligatorily to all the members of the matrilineage and can strike only them.

For example, my kunu can strike my sister's son but not my wife nor my children (they are subject to the kunu of their own lineage). /223/

[782] The kunu, striking the lineage as a whole, can be appeased only by prayers uniting (at least in principle) the whole lineage. [571] That is the respect in which the kunu may be defined as a social institution, for it is, we shall see, the principal cement holding the groups together.

The unleashing of a kunu does not necessarily and immediately follow the destruction of a termitary or the death of a dagowe snake. The god thus offended avenges itself by making a certain number of members of the lineage sick and 784 613 782 by causing limited misfortunes to happen. When things are at that point the kunu can still be exercised by prayers and offerings. In 1957 the beginning of a kunu was manifesting itself thus in the Awara Bakka lineage of Asisi; very frightened, the members of the lineage made offerings and prayers to exercise it.

784 613 [673] [961] But if the lineage people neglect the warnings of the god, if through laziness or selfishness too great a number of them are absent from the collective prayers and do not take part in the offerings, prayers and offerings will be refused and the god will kill one of them. From then on the kunu is unleashed and can no longer leave the lineage. Its involuntary bearer [928] will have to bequeath it upon his death to a member of the lineage, who cannot refuse this legacy and must immediately

784 /228 cont./

613 They are the object of three kunu:

786 --One exercised by a Papa gadu god whose bearer up into
787 1956 was Kotoïda († Oct. 1956), who bequeathed it to ○ Mani (Afi lineage, d12).

784 --The other exercised by a yɔrka of the Lapé lineage.
785 This kunu dates from about 60 years ago; Alémin (Afi lineage,
613 b3, Kormotibo village), 80 years old in 1957, had when he was young cut a clearing in a place which was found to be an
[787] old abandoned Boni cemetery (opposite Maripasoula). Some time afterward, a yɔrka revealed itself in a woman of the Lapé lineage, saying that it was exercising a kunu against the family of the sacrilegious person.

[761] It is to this yɔrka, whose bearer is M... (L2, Boniville), that the death of Kotoïda in October, 1956 is especially attributed.

--A third kunu is exercised by A..., of the Papaïston 2
[684] lineage. A... had committed pikadu. Surprised by Alémin (Afi lineage), he had paid the latter to obtain his silence.
[762] But Alémin had talked. Dishonored, A... committed suicide with a gunshot; some time afterward his yɔrka revealed itself in Alémin; it exercises a kunu on this lineage.

613 Situation of the other lineages with respect to the kunu. The
614 Papaïston lineage is divided into two groups: Papaïston 1 (the
784 principal one) and Papaïston 2, of which there remain only three living members: two women and one young man. This remainder of a lineage continues to bear its own kunu, which is unique and separate from that of the principal group.

The principal group forms a unit with respect to the kunu.

The Lapé lineage, cut from the point of view of genealogy into two pieces, forms a unit with respect to the kunu. We
[114] have been able to collect only fragmentary information on the various kunu of this village.

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784 A kunu is exercised by a Dipélu yɔrka, borne in 1958 by
795 a Loka woman. It is invoked before the fraga tiki of l'Enfant
778 Perdu village (Dipélu I). Sometimes a broko dε is celebrated
768 for it in the same forms as the ceremony of the eighth day
613 after death.

784 We have likewise not been able to collect complete
613 information on the kunu of the Kotika lineage. This lineage,
● 114 divided into three fractions, forms a unit with respect to the kunu.

784 A kunu is exercised by the yɔrka of a Surinam Creole
613 assassinated in former times by a member of the lineage. Its
795 bearer in 1958 was Todo (K1, E68), a man of the Kotika lo
787 living in Boniville. In 1958 a young woman of the lineage,
[761] Awini (K1, E37), died suddenly; the yɔrka revealed that it
[684] had struck Awini because she had a liaison with Sintamann (K3, E145), thus committing pikadu. The idea of the collective responsibility of the lineage is so deeply accepted by the Boni that the near relatives of the dead woman did not reproach Sintamann at all.

784 /229/ A yɔrka of the Kotika lineage may exercise a kunu on
613 the Djuka. This is the case of an affair going back to 1950;
795 a young woman died some time after having a serious discussion
761 with a Djuka woman who had hit her. Deaths among the Djuka
619 these last years had been attributed to its vengeance.

784 It seems that there is no other kunu exercised by a Djuka
619 upon a Boni lineage and vice versa. This is surprising, con-
613 sidering the fights which in former times set the two nations against each other.

621 The Djuka and Saramaka living isolated in the midst
784 of the Boni know their kunu, which were revealed to them in
[755] childhood. In case of sickness, they employ divinatory pro-
[613] cedures in order to know what kunu is concerned, then they make offerings. But in case of serious illness, they are forced to go back to the village of origin of their lineage.

/231 cont./

which people do not hesitate to come to ask for remedies or opinions, in spite of the evil they have done to the lineage and perhaps will do tomorrow. It is even allowable to wonder whether people do not prefer to consult the most wicked divinities, for they are believed to be stronger.

The kunu focuses, turns aside toward high purposes the blind forces of superstition, fear, and rancor. Several authors who have written on the Refugee Blacks have stated that calamities were almost unfailingly attributed to sorcery (wisi). This is a grave error due to the fact that they believed they could transpose to the Refugee Blacks what is observed among the Creole populations of Surinam. If this were true, no positive social bond could exist. We believe we can assert that among the Refugee Blacks divination lays the blame on sorcery in only scarcely a tenth of the misfortunes. Here, among other examples, are several typical cases concerning Boni who worked with us or whom we have known especially well:

--In 1948, Fintiman (Dju) falls ill (violent pains in the legs); kunu of a Kintamasu.

--In 1948, Galmo (Papaïston) is accidentally hurt (gun backfire): kunu.

--In 1949, Diolè, captain of the Dju lo, is smitten with hemiplegia and remains paralyzed. He dies in 1951: kunu of a Papa gadu.

--In 1950, a Saramaka is killed in a hunting accident (a gun in poor condition went off by itself): [illegible]ku (accident).

--In 1951, Kanayen (Kotika) drowns while sailing at night on the river: wisi.

--In 1951, Loka (Dju) dies at the age of 70: kunu of an Ampuku.

--In 1951, F... (Dju) is seriously hurt by the falling of a branch while cutting his clearing: kunu of a yɔrka.

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689 attenuated form of wisi; in serious cases the grand man may inflict a severe punishment on the guilty ones.

789 ɔbia. The Refugee Blacks use the word ɔbia (1) to designate

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1. The term ɔbia is used by the Refugee Blacks when they are speaking to outsiders, to designate positive magic, but in reality this term has a very different meaning in their language. It designates any kind of magic action, negative as well as positive; likewise the term ɔbiamã has the sense of sorcerer as well as that of holder of a remedy.

192 The Boni among themselves use the word deesi, remedy, instead of ɔbia. They do not use the word deesimã in place of ɔbiamã. It is said, for example, of a man who knows the rites of a cult of possession "A sabi Papa gadu sani" (he knows the things of Papa gadu).

[789] The term gadumã designates one who is possessed of a god, and not one who knows how to bring on possession.

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114 In the rest of this work we shall continue, nevertheless, to use the terms ɔbia and ɔbiamã to designate positive magic, in order to facilitate collation with the English- and Dutch-language authors who have used it in this sense.

752 /255 cont./
834 ɔbiaman who treats a wound made by a firearm to observe
[791] chastity during the whole duration of the treatment. It is for this reason that the Boni hesitate to have gunshot wounds cared for in hospitals.

784 Kina. The interdictions of the Refugee Blacks generally have
[262] to do with food. There are five categories of them to our knowledge:

[753] --Bwasi kina, basic kina, mark of patrilineages, the breaking of which gives leprosy;

--Akka kina, often called gadu kina, established by divination and believed to be imposed by the akka;

--Gadu kina, mark of possession by a divinity;

--Obia kina, interdiction attached to each object involving a magic power, and which must be observed for this power to last;

--Finally, local kina, particularly the kina dɛ, days of rest, going back to the idea of the day of rest of the local divinity. They observe, for example, that the Mana River has a kina dɛ on Sunday. The Saramaka observe it strictly. The Boni we took on the Mana in 1949 went to find out from the Saramaka, and asked us to stop navigation on Sunday,
[648] for this kina was very urgent. It is noteworthy however that the Boni bow in such circumstances before the will of the Europeans, as with respect to their own kina dɛ of Friday; in effect they are assuming that if they are ordered to be on duty, it is the European alone who bears the responsibility for breaking the kina.

[428] It is possible that the kina alluded to by Mr. W. F. Van
[114] Lier and which, among the Djuka, would be imposed on a
[613] whole matrilineage are also local kina; in any case no kina is transmissible through the mother, all the Refugee Blacks are explicit on that point.

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year; by taking an Indian woman as his wife he apparently sought to humiliate his subjects.

Awensay's children and grandchildren were all dead in 1957 except for two women, both sterile. There has been no other case of marriage between Boni and Indians.

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439 /294/ In practice, the basis for commercial exchanges is the following: the Indians furnish hammocks, and above all dogs trained for hunting, to which great value is attached. The Boni furnish boats. In days gone by they also brought imported objects, machetes, axes, and beads, but this form of trade has disappeared since the Indians have had the possibility of getting supplies from the Europeans.

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648 Several observers, coming after Coudreau (1890) and Grébert (1937) in particular, have expressed the opinion that these relations were founded on fear and that the Boni, utilizing mysterious means of pressure, used to oppress the Indians.

After seven missions spent in contact with both, we affirm that these assertions are without foundation. On the contrary, one can only admire the way in which these primitive groups have been able to create loyal and trusting relations with one another. The Indians and Boni who have worked with us have always shown themselves happy to be together. To realize this, it was sufficient to hear the animated conversations they used to have in the evening around the campfires about their respective families, the events which took place in their villages, fishing, or hunting.

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888 829 This is a point of view which has great importance in the eyes of the Boni, for whom finishing one's days at the hospice or being reduced to asking for the help of outsiders constitutes the worst downfall.

829 They fear, moreover, as we have shown, Creole magic which they liken to a form of wisi.

On the other hand, they are impressed by the attainments of the Creoles, the real spirit of initiative and the strong personality of some of them; moreover, the Boni who have been to Cayenne have noticed the solicitude of the administration 829 with respect to the population of the communes. For all these 177 reasons there exists among the Boni a certain body of opinion 178 in favor of creolization. But the very unique type of life of the [114] Boni and their desire to keep their special customs attach them to their ancestral form of life; about 1890 the explorer Coudreau, observing the same facts, was predicting imminent creolization of the Boni. In fact, this did not happen, and it is unlikely to.

648 464 Traditional relations with Europeans. The Refugee Blacks constitute an important element in the economic life of the Guianas; on behalf of the administration and European enterprises they perform many jobs (boating, wood-floating, tree-felling). 648 461 They are not well adapted to other kinds of work, but in these [465] activities which fit with their traditional mode of life they are equal if not superior to any labor. Very highly paid, they work with speed, effectiveness, and intelligence, exhibiting an initiative and sense of duty not commonly found in Africans(1).

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1. It is to be noted that if they stop leading their traditional kind of life, for example if they settle permanently near European establishments, they rapidly lose these qualities.

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114 Here desirous of remaining on the plane of strict scientific objectivity, we shall avoid entering the discussion of the benefit springing from this action, which, moreover, would necessitate a long development. We shall limit ourselves to showing that it appears to us to be doomed to failure.

871 177 --The experiment of schooling has been made for more than 30 years among the Boni in the village of Kotika. Half a dozen children, doing well in their studies, left for Surinam and broke with their native group. In the others, the teaching received left only faint traces. As a matter of fact, there is no room in a normal intelligence to receive at the same time the mass of technical knowledge necessary for holding one's own in the society of the Refugee Blacks and ordinary school instruction. One necessarily drives out the other; now the Boni are extremely fond of their free life on the great river, which assures them very satisfactory material conditions of living.

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797 177 194 --Evangelization has been carried on with perseverance for more than 200 years with the Refugee Blacks of Surinam. It has not given appreciable results. It has been the same in French Guiana with the action carried on with the Saramaka working /299/ near the communes of the coast (1), and more recently with the Boni of the Upper Maroni.

[648]

1. The Saramaka not only have no tendency to be converted, but they exert a significant influence on the population of the communes. On the Oyapok the Saramaka healer has numerous clients, and in spite of the clergy's interdiction, many women go to the possession dances of the Papa gudu serpent gods.

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of possession exist, the populations are particularly impermeable to Christian influence. Apparently destroyed, these cults soon reappear in another form, sometimes in Christian guise (possession by the saints).

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Let us add that one of the great strengths of the custom of the Refugee Blacks is the privileged position it gives to the woman. Women, shielded from the direct influence of Europeans and Creoles, and besides practically inaccessible to all reasoning, are hostile to changes which would infringe on their privileges. Now it is they, in fact, who have the education of the children in their hands.

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Thus it does not appear possible to "assimilate" these populations by destroying their original culture. The attempts inspired by fanaticism for civilizing will have as their only result its impoverishment, pushing the Refugee Blacks to dissimulate their beliefs, to abandon their art, costume, songs, and dances, all that makes up their joy in living. But the social structure based on the fear of ancestors and gods could be destroyed only by violence. We may hope that nobody thinks of coming to that.

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As for us who have lived a long time in the midst of the Refugee Blacks, we feel a deep esteem for them. By their historic past, the originality of the customs they have developed, the good relations they have been able to create with the other populations, they have proved their creative abilities; they deserve to be allowed to evolve in their own way. /blank page/

6:Hurault--541 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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Kahn, Morton C. Djuka. The bush negroes of Dutch Guiana. New York, 1931.

Wong, E. Hoofdenverkiezing, stamverdeeling en stamverspreiding der Boschnegers van Suriname in de 18° en 19° eeuw (elections of heads, spread and division of the Refugee Black tribes in Surinam in the 18th and 19th centuries). Bijtragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië, Vol. 97, 1938.

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[114] Editor's Note. -- An additional note by the same author, summarizing the data acquired on the origin of the various African survivals of the Refugee Blacks, will appear in the IFAN Bulletin, series B, volume XXIV, 1962.